

2443

For Rev. Mr. Hindsell
Windsor



AN
ORDINATION
SERMON.





2732

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE REVEREND

NATHAN STRONG,

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN *HARTFORD*;

BY HIS FATHER, THE REVEREND

NATHAN STRONG,

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN *COVENTRY*.

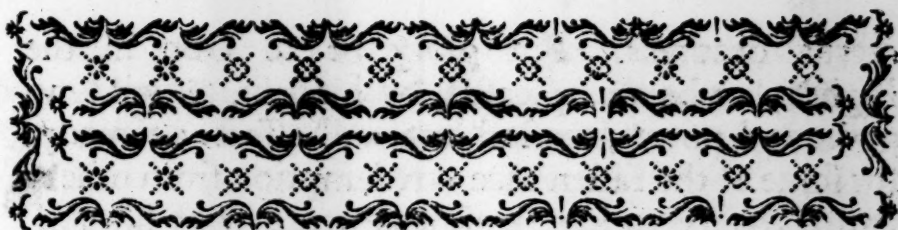
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H A R T F O R D:

Printed by EBEN. WATSON, near the Great Bridge.

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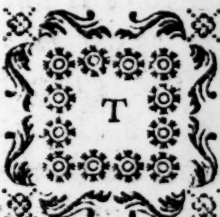




AN ORDINATION SERMON.

2 TIMOTHY, IV. 5.

But watch thou in all things; endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy Ministry.

 HE primitive happiness and dignity of man, consisted in an intimate acquaintance with God, and conformity to his moral perfections. The great misery of human nature, introduced by the apostacy, is blindness to the moral beauty and excellency of things spiritual and divine, and aversion to holiness. Instead of delight and complacency in God, we are alienated from him, at enmity with him; so that unless this blindness be removed, and the unholy heart changed, we must necessarily remain morally blind in the present world, and finally perish in the horrors of eternal

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eternal deadness. But glory be to God in the highest ! who was pleased, by his infinite wisdom, grace and power, to find out and effect a remedy, for some of the fallen race---redemption from misery and recovery to happiness and peace with himself.

FOR this end, God sent his eternal SON, to visit this benighted world with divine light. He came to reveal the grace of the FATHER, to the children of men ; and by coming a light into the world, among other important ends, removed external darkness ; gave a clearer revelation of God, and his will to mankind ; and appointed a gospel ministry, under the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, to open blind eyes, and bring men from darkness into marvelous light. In this business, divine wisdom hath chose to improve men like ourselves, embassadors for CHRIST, in his name, to invite sinners to be reconciled to God. *This treasure is put in earthen vessels ; that the excellency of the power may appear to be from God.* The work of the gospel ministry is most arduous, high and noble, and it is a matter of the greatest importance, that it be faithfully performed ; for the honor of CHRIST, and the eternal interest of men depend thereon. Therefore the apostle emphatically exclaims, Who is sufficient for these things ! Of the same import, we find a most solemn charge given to *Timothy*, in the beginning of our context, calculated to stir him up to diligence, constancy and faithfulness, in discharge of the various duties, of the important trust reposed in him----*I charge thee therefore, before GOD and the*
LORD

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LORD JESUS CHRIST, *who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Preach the word, the pure word of God; and not the cunningly devised fables and traditions, which spring from the wit and fancy of a corrupt mind. Preach the word, the law of God, and the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, as it is exhibited in the scriptures, to deliver fallen men from the ruin of their apostacy, and restore them to holiness and peace with God, by faith in CHRIST, the great REDEEMER. Be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort.* Continue in this work with courage, boldness, patience and faithfulness. Shun no proper opportunity of dispensing the sweet favour of the knowledge of CHRIST. This do, in this abide; as you regard the love and favour of God; as you would approve yourself, a good steward of the mysteries of the *Most High*, whose omniscient eye is on you; as you will answer at the great day, *at the appearing and kingdom of your glorious Judge.* Then succeed the words of my text, in which he exhorts to care and watchfulness; to encounter trials and afflictions, with a gospel temper; to do the work of an evangelist, or faithful minister of CHRIST.

AN *evangelist* was a minister of the gospel, joined to the apostles, as an assistant in preaching the gospel, and establishing the churches. My text may be thus paraphrased. The work in which you are engaged is great, the duty of your office
very

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very extensive, and its nature such, as will likely involve you in many unexpected trials and afflictions; but that none of these things may move or divert you, shake off drowiness, fulfil the duties of your station. *Make full proof of your ministry.* So fulfil it, as not only to escape the reproaches of your own conscience, and the just censures of men; but that you may be approved and accepted by God.

I WILL endeavour to illustrate the following propositions, in my present discourse.

- I. THE work of the Ministry is a great and difficult work, attended with many trials and discouragements.
- II. SHEW in what manner Ministers of the gospel, notwithstanding all impediments, are faithfully to fulfil their Ministry.
- III. It is a matter of the greatest importance, that Ministers of CHRIST, faithfully fulfil their Ministry, or in the phrase of inspiration, make full proof of it. I am,

I. To shew that the work of the Ministry is a great and difficult work; attended with many trials and discouragements. On this consideration, we have the exhortations in our text, *to watch in all things, and endure affliction.* The solemnity of the charge, given to preach the word, plainly intimates the greatness and difficulty of the work. The apostle being well acquainted with human nature; knowing how apt, even good men are to sink in
time

time of severe trial ; understanding the bad consequences of betraying the cause of CHRIST : thought proper to warn *Timothy*, and in him all ministers of the gospel, to watch, and stand equipped with the whole armour of God, as christian heroes, prepared to encounter the severest trials.

THE truth of the proposition will appear from the following considerations.

I, THE nature of the work : It is conversant with the deep things of God, and the eternal interest of immortal souls.--- Many think the business of the Minister light, easy, and not attended with any distressing cares, fears and labour. It is true, that the work at many times, and on many accounts, is most pleasant and delightful.

BUT, they who think the life, a life of ease, and carnal pleasure, entertain a mistaken notion. Paul speaks another language; Having mentioned many outward trials, he saith, *beside those things that are without, that which cometh on me daily, the care of all the Churches.* * Intimating by this the inward care and concern of CHRIST's Ministers, for the spiritual welfare of their people, a care that is often most pressing and intense. The work, when duly attended, requires much hard study, and the closest application of thought, by which the strength is naturally exhausted, and the spirits wasted. There is difficulty in investigating and understanding

* 2 Cor. xi. 28.

understanding the will of CHRIST; still greater difficulty in knowing how rightly to divide the word of truth, and give every one his proportion in due season. For a man to take care of his own vineyard, to watch for his own soul, is an arduous task; still more arduous when he has added to this, the care and charge of others. Ministers of the Church, must not take heed for themselves only, they must watch for the souls of their people, as those who are to give an account. †

2, THE greatness and difficulty of the ministerial service, appears from the opposition, and many discouraging circumstances, which attend the discharge of their office.

PREACHERS of the Gospel, are engaged in a spiritual warfare, in common with all other Christians---they have to contend with their own wicked hearts---they have to contend with the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Tho' they are by office Angels, they are by nature Men---liable to like passions---subject to like temptations; so that they are often sunk with discouragements, and feel unable to perform the duties to which they are called. But this is not the whole of their unhappiness,---they meet with many discouragements and much opposition from without. It is their business, in a special manner, to engage in a warfare with the sins and lusts of men; to destroy the power of Satan, and establish

† Heb. xiii. 17.

bliss the kingdom of Christ thereon; to enlighten the understanding of the ignorant, turn men from darkness to light, and from the influence of Satan unto the living God. † Hence it comes to pass, that faithful Ministers are by many despised and hated, more than any others in the world. If they will dispence with men's lusts, daub with untempered mortar, prophesy smooth things, and keep at a distance from conscience; they may possibly escape the reproach and slander of many tongues: but if they deal plainly with mankind for their iniquities, and let them know the necessity of divorcing all their lusts, of turning to God on the humbling holy terms of the Gospel, by faith in Jesus Christ; in a word, if they inform them, *that they must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, that they must live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world;* § according to the apostolic direction; they will soon feel the severity of reproach, and it will be happy, if their persons and performances are not the common ridicule of the prophane and abandoned. Thus performing their duty, by many they will be treated no better than our LORD, who was called *a man glutunous, a wine biber, and a friend to publicans and sinners;* or John, his friend, *who was said to have a Devil.*

3, UNSUCCESSFULNESS is another great discouragement that attends the ministerial service.

WHEN Ministers have exerted all their abilities,
for

† Acts xx vi. 18.

§ Tit. ii. 12.

for the good of their people; endeavoured faithfully their instruction, reformation and conversion to God, and find but little, or no good fruit of their labour; when all seems as water spilt on the ground; their people declining from God, and growing worse, rather than better; the prospect must be disheartening, and will oblige them to adopt the mournful complaint of the Prophet, *¶ I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain.* Though discouraging reflections of this kind, should not be tolerated; there appears nothing strange in their arising, when we consider the constitution of human nature. In all the affairs of human life fruitless labour promotes discouragement.

To conclude this head of discourse, the accounts we have in God's word, of the greatness of the work, and the treatment the Ministers of CHRIST have received in past ages; the unexempled trials they have felt, and the severe reproaches cast on them by the enemies of virtue; in addition to this, things of the same nature, which fall under the observation of every judicious observer, who will open his eyes, and behold the christian world in its present state, are enough to convince every one of the truth now under consideration.-----By this view of the ministerial service, we are led to a melancholy reflection, that by our sin and abuse of divine grace, a work containing one principal instituted

stituted means of the conversion and salvation of sinners, should be attended with so many discouragements and impending circumstances.

II. I AM to shew in what manner Ministers of the Gospel, notwithstanding all impediments, are faithfully to fulfil their Ministry.

EVERY part of the ministerial work, in some way, directly respects the honour of God, and the interest of immortal man; therefore it is important, that this work be faithfully performed, more than any other in the world. Before I speak directly of the positive duties of office, to be discharged by Ministers of CHRIST; I will mention some qualifications, that should attend and accompany them in their sacred employment.

I. THE Minister of CHRIST should be furnished with a good degree of knowledge and understanding, educated and fitted for service, before he engages in the sacred work.----In the present day, we may not expect preparation by a miracle; but it must be obtained by study, labour, and industry; by close and frequent examination of the word of God, the great repository of knowledge, the most useful and sacred; that there may be understanding of God's will, and ability rightly to divide the word of truth, and give every one his portion in due season. Tho' some may deny human literature, and esteem it an unnecessary part of the furniture of a Gospel Minister; yet it appears that Paul thought otherwise; for when he

was giving the qualifications of a Bishop, he says, he must be *apt to teach*, which cannot be, without knowledge and ability for that purpose; * Hence we find him exhorting Timothy to the acquirement of knowledge, that he might be qualified for the holy employment, *'till I come, give attendance to reading, exhortation and doctrine, meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all.* † Moreover, a great degree of ignorance is inconsistent with the very nature of the minister's business, it is his business to open, explain, illustrate, and defend the great doctrines of christianity, in a familiar manner; to set them before the mind in the clear light of Revelation and right reason. It is his business, not only to defend the doctrines of CHRIST, but confute such as oppose themselves to the truth; hence it is said, *a Bishop must hold fast the faithful word, as he hath received; that he may be able by sound doctrine, to exhort and convince the gain-sayers, for there are many unruly and vain talkers, whose mouths must be stopped.* ‡

2. HE must be sent by Christ, or regularly introduced to the work.

CHRIST is the sovereign Lord, Lawgiver, Head, and King of the church; and all officers and ordinances in the church, are of his appointment and institution; therefore it is suitable, that such
as

* 1 Tim. iii. 2. † 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. ‡ Tit. i. 9, 10, 11.

as are put into office, should be inducted agreeable to his revealed will, our only directory in the case. None are Ministers of CHRIST, but what are called, qualified, and by him admitted labourers in the LORD's Vineyard.

THE Apostles, and extraordinary officers of the church were introduced to their work, in an extraordinary way and manner; the ordinary ministers of CHRIST, in a common and ordinary way: Yet, the latter, as truly by CHRIST, and as much according to his will, as the former. It is true, they are put into office by the instrumentality of men; but this is according to the pattern delivered to us in the word of God, *by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, who are officers of CHRIST, for this business. In this transaction, they act by his appointment, by the commission and authority with which they are invested; so that every Minister, thus set apart, acts by divine authority, and is introduced to office by Christ himself. It is the greatest presumption in any, to assume this character to themselves, unless they can give evidence of their mission, from the Head of the Church. *For no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron; so also CHRIST glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, this day have I begotten thee.* *

3. It is necessary that a Minister should be faithful

*Heb. v. 4, 5.

faithful to his own soul; or have a saving and experimental acquaintance with CHRIST, and the power of divine grace, on his own heart.

THIS is evident, from the principal end and design of the gospel ministry, which is to subserve the conversion, sanctification, and eternal salvation of sinners, by espousing them to CHRIST the divine Head and Husband of the Church. For this end it is that the peculiar beauty, excellence and glory of the REDEEMER, which are very influential on the mind, and known only by experience, should be displayed. The minds of all, teachers as well as others, are by nature blind. Without a spiritual and supernatural renovation of the heart, they will think, if not say, in the language of the Prophet, *there is no form, comeliness or beauty in CHRIST*, that they should desire him. How can a Minister without a saving knowledge of the Redeemer, be supposed faithfully to fulfil his ministry? Can a man be faithful to the souls of others, and to his God, who is unfaithful to his own soul? Can any one be properly concerned and animated for the interest of others, who doth not regard his own interest? Will such as neglect the great salvation for themselves, be solicitous whether others are saved or not? I do not say, that sanctifying grace is absolutely necessary, for the constitution of a lawful, visible minister of the church; but it is certainly necessary, both for their own personal safety, and to constitute an accomplished and faithful minister.----To this purpose, are the words of our glorious LORD to Peter, whom he was about to send forth to execute the ministerial

nisterial service. * *Simon, Son of Jc:as, lovest thou me?* The question was repeated to Peter no less than three times; notwithstanding a direct answer was given at the first proposal, and that without any assuming airs of pride and ostentation, but becoming seriousness, and humility. *Yea, LORD,* said he, *thou knowest that I love thee,* and the third time, he modestly appealed to the omniscience of CHRIST, *LORD, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* The use made of these words, shew us, that it is a matter of great importance, that a teacher of the Church, have a chief and supreme love for CHRIST; for it was on Peter's solemn appeal to him, who knew the sincerity of his heart, and truth of his love; that he committed to him the care of feeding the sheep and lambs of his fold. Indeed, without sanctifying grace, it seems a minister must be deficient in every part of his work; for however well he may be accomplished in other respects, he wants the chief spring of motion and activity, love to the Lord JESUS CHRIST.-----Supreme love to God, promotes love to the souls of men, a deep concern to honour God, and serve the interest of the REDEEMER's kingdom;---this furnishes a Minister with a rational and fervent zeal, arms him with courage, and supplies him with resolution in the work of the LORD. The words of the Apostle intimate this, *for whether faith he, we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of CHRIST constraineth us, because we thus judge, that*
if

* John i. 15, 16, 17.

§ ii. Cor. x. 13, 14.

if one died for all, then were all dead. * Love to CHRIST hath a constraining influence on the mind, and disposes to a ready, chearful performance of every duty, tho' attended with the greatest difficulty. An experimental acquaintance with the grace of GOD, wonderfully assists in applying the truth, to the particular cases and circumstances of those, with whom a Minister is concerned, especially in directing persons under the pressure of a wounded spirit. Every one should be able to say, *blessed be the GOD of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations; that we may be able to comfort others, that are in any trouble, with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of GOD.* §

I WILL now mention some of the positive duties to be performed by Ministers of CHRIST, in the fulfilment of their office.

THEY must faithfully preach the law of GOD, and the gospel of JESUS CHRIST. This was given in solemn charge to Timothy, by Saint Paul, *preach the word*—the pure uncorrupted word of GOD. They must not come to their people, in their own name; they must come in the name of CHRIST their LORD. Their messages must not be of their own inventions; but the pure truth, and word of GOD; for it is their business to teach the character of CHRIST, the benefits of his purchase, and the riches

* i. Cor. 1, 3, 4.

riches of his grace, to a lost and perishing world; agreeable to the sacred oracles, and the testimony of unerring truth. Hear Paul's discription of his own manner, *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* * Hence we find a crucified SAVIOUR, and the doctrines of redemption, almost universally the subjects of his preaching, subjects sweet and agreeable! the center in which all the lines of divine truth meet. As these were the principal subjects of his preaching; so he vindicated his doctrines by the testimony of GOD. This should be the manner of all who teach; they should have recourse to the law and testimony, take all their direction from the word of GOD, and accept this their guide and council in every part of their sacred work. If they would be found skilful and successful ministers of CHRIST, *the weapons of their warfare, should not be carnal, but spiritual and mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strong holds;* † And all the arguments, motives and persuasives, they bring to their people, should be derived from the sacred spring and fountain of truth.

MOREOVER, Ministers should not only preach the law of GOD, and gospel of CHRIST; but they must publish and declare the whole truth.

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* 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.

† 2 Cor. x. 14.

WHATEVER GOD hath revealed in his word, which concerns his own honor, or the salvation of perishing men, must by the teacher of the church, be fully and faithfully inculcated on those who hear. This is no more than simple compliance with the designs of heaven, and co-operation with God, in what he hath done for the salvation of sinners. The principal things God designed in the revelation of his will, were a display of his grace to those who needed it, and the advancement of his own visible honor and glory. But how can these ends be reached, unless this grace be fully known and understood by men. *I am made a Minister*, saith Paul, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from generations, and from ages; but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known, what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is CHRIST, in you the hope of glory. Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom; that we may present every man, perfect in CHRIST JESUS. One principal end of the very public appearance CHRIST made in his incarnation, death and sufferings was, that knowledge of himself, that the grace and wisdom of God, in the redemption of men, might be universally manifested. For these things were not done in a corner; but purposely before many witnesses, in view of the world.

Since

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Since the providence of God, hath so remarkably appeared, in dispersing the knowledge of the gospel ; ministers, who are the heralds of CHRIST to publish his grace, and the doctrines of redemption, must carefully speak the whole truth, or they will shew themselves unfaithful, both to God and man. They should be able, with truth to adopt the pathetic valedictory of Paul, left on sacred record for our instruction. *And now ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God: I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare to you, all the council of God.* * To the great and fundamental doctrines of the christian religion, there should be close attention; such doctrines as these, eternal election, original sin, the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness, justification by faith alone, the necessity of special grace in conversion, the saints perseverance in holiness unto eternal life. These doctrines are the principal basis and foundation on which the superstructure of our holy religion stands: these doctrines must therefore be opened, explained, confirmed and defended from the sacred oracles, where they are abundantly asserted. God's sovereignty in the bestowment of his grace, the mediation, satisfaction and intercession of CHRIST, the only procuring cause of salvation, should be displayed with force and energy.

THAT mankind may receive saving advantage

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from

* Acts, xx. 25, 27.

from the gospel, they must be taught the absolute necessity of an experimental acquaintance with the truth ; or a special application of CHRIST's purchase to the soul, for what will an unapplied CHRIST avail ? However distasteful it may be, they must be taught the miserable, lost and guilty state of men by nature ; that they are children of wrath, and spiritually dead in sin, under the curse of a broken law ; unable to do any thing for their own justification, before God. They must be taught the necessity and importance of regeneration, or the new birth ; in which change all the powers and faculties of the mind are rectified, and a foundation laid in the heart for holy action, by the supernatural operation and efficiency of the Holy Ghost. They must be taught a vital union to CHRIST by a lively faith, the fulness, suitableness and sufficiency of his grace, for the justification, pardon and compleat salvation of every one which believeth. To give this instruction CHRIST sends his ministers----Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Critical and faithful application to the different state of their hearers is another thing, to which they must attend in their preaching. Sometimes they must become sons of thunder, to rouse the sleepy and secure ; sometimes sons of consolation, to administer comfort to the disconsolate.

* Mark xvi, 15, 16.

solate. To the careless, unbelieving and impenitent, they should declare the curses of a broken law, for their conviction, agreeable to the prophetic direction, *cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.*† To desponding sinners, solicitously enquiring the way to Zion, the fulness of the merits and grace of CHRIST must be displayed---to the disconsolate children of God, the encouragements and promises of the gospel, they must *strengthen the weak bands, and confirm the feeble knees*; say to them, *that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not. Behold your God will come with vengeance, even GOD with a recompence, he will come and save you.*‡ To conclude this head of discourse. They must urge on their people, the nature and necessity of holiness, as the only way to see GOD. Though we are not to give good works, or personal holiness the credit of justifying us before GOD; yet they ought to be inculcated, as the genuine fruit of a true and justifying faith.

HENCE we find the apostle giving direction to Titus in this case. *Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us; by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope* of

† Isaiah lviii. 11.

‡ Isaiah xxxv. 3, 4.

of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly; that they which have believed in GOD, might be careful to maintain good works, these things are good and profitable to men. § In this manner, notwithstanding all impediments, ministers of the gospel, must labour with courage, constancy and faithfulness, to fulfil the duties of their trust.

III. It is a matter of the greatest importance, that ministers of the gospel faithfully fulfil their ministry, or make full proof it.

1st. THIS appears from what Paul suggested to Timothy, *that the time would come, when men would not endure sound doctrine; but turn away their ears from the truth.* The apostle did not mention this, as an evil that would take place in futurity, of which there was then no appearances in the church; but he meant to intimate that it would encrease, more and more in the world, which hath been the case down to the present day. If we look abroad, and behold the world, we cannot but see the mystery of iniquity working, and spreading almost through the church. It is a dark and melancholy day in the church. How little of the power of Godliness, and exercise of vital piety, is found among the professing people of God! The love of many waxes cold, iniquity abounds, and what serves to augment the gloomy aspect, is the encrease and spread

§ Titus. iii 5, 8.

spread of error in the Church; whereby all which is dear to the people of God is threatened. By this means, the ancient doctrines of the scriptures, the divinity of our venerable fathers, is in a measure lost; and the peculiar honor, the inexpressible glory of the great REDEEMER shamefully eclipsed. Hence it appears to be of great importance, that ministers whose business is to stand in defence of the gospel; to plead the cause of God; and unite mankind to CHRIST on the terms of the gospel, should faithfully fulfil their ministry.

2d. THE personal interest of ministers makes it a matter of the highest importance, that they fulfil the duties of their office with faithfulness. A most solemn charge, and the oath of God is binding on them. Being made spiritual watchmen, and the stewards of God, responsible to him; they must watch for souls, as those who are to give an account of their stewardship. And what a dreadful account will careless watchmen of the church have to give, in that day when the LORD JESUS CHRIST shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on the disobedient and unfaithful.

THEY will not only have to stand in their own lot like other men; but give an account of the stewardship as ministers, and their unfaithfulness in the LORD's work. There is a dreadful curse pronounced on those who do the LORD's work deceitfully, and this will take place, in the most eminent manner, on unfaithful ministers. No

tongue can tell, no words illustrate, no heart conceive what horror, anguish and despair will torment their guilty minds, when, added to all their other crimes, the blood of souls shall cry for vengeance on them. On the other hand, such as are found faithfully to fulfil their ministry, will have a distinguished reward of grace conferred on them. Such are continually unto God, a sweet saviour of CHRIST, both in them that are saved, and them that perish, and shall finally be possessed of everlasting rest. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his LORD hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due Season ; blessed is that servant, whom his LORD when he cometh, shall find so doing.

3d. THEY are engaged in the work of God, therefore it is a matter of the greatest importance, that they fulfil their ministry faithfully. Being the ambassadors of CHRIST, their business is not to gain the love of men to themselves ; but to persuade them to love and admire the REDEEMER. If we consider in what a high and honourable work they are employed, and the infinite condescension of God in putting them into the ministry ; they must be faithful or shew themselves not only guilty of common sin, but the greatest ingratitude.

4th. THE importance of a faithful fulfilment of their ministry appears, from considering the worth and preciousness of immortal souls. Our SAVIOUR has intimated the inexpressible worth of the soul, in these

these words, *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul!* * All the riches and glory of this world are an inferior consideration, when compared with the souls of men, the redemption of which is precious, and ceaseth from men forever. That they are of infinite worth appears from what the great RAMSOMER hath done for our redemption. For this he veiled his divinity in humanity, subjected himself to sorrow, ignominy and disgrace, and even shed his blood on the accursed tree. The care of these souls for whom CHRIST died, is committed to those of us who are ministers; and our work is connected with their salvation, which in a measure depends on our faithful fulfilment of our ministry. When we consider the danger there is of this charge being lost, from their own indisposition to virtue; from their backwardness to comply with the terms of life by JESUS CHRIST; and from the unwearied dilligence of satan, to prevent their eternal salvation, it appears a matter of the greatest importance, that ministers should faithfully fulfil their trust, and make full proof of their ministry.

THE remainder of this discourse shall be some inferences and application. From what has been delivered we learn,

Ist. ACCORDING as ministers are faithful or unfaithful

* Mark viii. 36.

faithful in their LORD's work; they are the happiest or most miserable men in the world. If faithful, they shall not only have an approving conscience, and the approbation of GOD in this life; but a distinguished reward of grace in the glory of Heaven. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.* † If unfaithful, they will be most miserable, unhappy in this life, and subjected to a condemnation most fearful and attended with many peculiar aggravations.

2d. Tho' the work of the ministry be great and difficult, yet it is an employment high, noble and honorable. The REDEEMER calls, commissions and improves them----embassadors for him, they do his work, plead his cause, seek his honor, and the advancement of his kingdom in the hearts of men. Though they are called into a field of danger, to encounter many trials, and meet much opposition; though they are often loaded with scandal and reproach, by ungodly men, urged on by satan; yet for their consolation they should remember this is no more than was received by our LORD, in whose service they are engaged.

3d. WE further learn to whom ministers must repair for all needed aid, help, and supplies of grace. They must repair to JESUS CHRIST whom they serve, for all that wisdom, prudence, strength, courage and resolution they need to discharge in a right

† Daniel xii. 3.

manner their duty, and fulfil the trusts committed to them. To this *Paul* exhorted *Timothy*, *Be strong in the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.*†

4. IF the work of the ministry be great and difficult, how unreasonable, sinful, and cruel are those persons, and that people, who instead of strengthening the hands, and encouraging the hearts of their Ministers, are doing much to retard their usefulness, and add a weight to their burden, by which their work is made much more difficult than it would otherwise be.

It is easy to conceive how the labour and toil of the ministry may be encreased, and rendered insupportable, by the carriage of those among whom they labour. If their people are disposed to find fault with every thing they say and do; if they are hard to be pleased, of a critical, rigid, jealous and censorious spirit, with what uneasiness and pain must a minister perform even the most common parts of his office. Persons of that temper shew themselves enemies to CHRIST, and the salvation of their own souls.

5. IF Gospel Ministers must fulfil their ministry faithfully, preach the word of God, and seek the salvation of men in every method; the people should hear carefully, and attend diligently and faithfully to what is delivered. Without this, the

† 2. Timothy ii. 4.

the most faithful and laborious ministry will be unprofitable to their people, and serve to enhance their guilt, and bring on a more aggravated condemnation. How inexcusable are those, who notwithstanding the reproof, council, and admonition of God's word, remain at ease in Zion, in a state of security, living in neglect of GOD, CHRIST, and the great salvation. Such as these, do not consider that the day of the Lord is at hand, when God will judge the secrets of men according to the same gospel which they now hear preached. How will they escape, if they neglect so great salvation? what will they do, in the day of visitation, when God comes to execute vengeance? what will be their sensations in the hour of death? their reflections, when CHRIST shall be revealed from Heaven, with his Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of CHRIST.

I WILL conclude with some addresses:

FIRST, to him who is now solemnly to be set apart by prayer, and the laying on the hands of the Presbytery, and take charge of this Church of CHRIST.

MY DEAR SON, with all the affection and tender feelings of a Father, I address you on this solemn occasion. This Council proceeding to set you apart to the most sacred employment in the world, according to the established order of the Gospel,

Gospel, by solemn prayer, and the imposition of hands; may serve as evidence to you, and this people, that they esteem you worthy to take part with them in the ministry, judging you agreeable to the revealed will of God, called, qualified, and sent forth into the LORD's harvest.

As by divine providence, a door is now opened for your public improvement in the visible church of God; I desire with my whole heart, to devote and give you up to CHRIST, to be improved in his service, for the building up his kingdom, and the advancement of his glory; wishing you grace, mercy and peace from God the FATHER, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. You are now going to take the care and charge of immortal souls, and act a part for CHRIST, his ambassador, in his name, to persuade men to be reconciled to God.

THAT you may be in the best manner qualified for the work, and found successful therein; see that CHRIST be formed in your own heart, that you be united to him by a living faith, and reconciled to God, thro' the MEDIATOR. If this is the case, you will be entitled to divine favour, and find the benefit and comfort, of that gracious promise of CHRIST, to his Ministers; *Lo! I am with you always, to the end of the world.* The work on which you are entering, is great and important, difficult and arduous. I doubt not but you have viewed it in that light, and that your mind

- mind is now employed with much serious thoughtfulness, on the charge you are presently to receive. Yet I will say, not to discourage, but that you may be forewarned; it is probable, numberless unexpected, unthought of difficulties, trials and discouragements will attend you, in the course of your ministry. The nature of your work, and office, is such attended with so much care and labour, that you will find it most difficult to perform the duties it demands. You must expect many discouragements from within; and if you are faithful, not a few impediments from without.

So great and difficult is the work, that the strength of an Angel is not sufficient to support, therefore the Apostle so emphatically expresses himself, *Who is sufficient for these things?* but be not discouraged, hear the words of the same Apostle, *Let none of these things move you, neither count you your life dear to yourself; so that you may finish your course with joy, and the ministry which you receive of the LORD JESUS, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.* For your encouragement, remember, that you are not to engage in the work in your own strength, or the strength of an Angel; but the strength of the LORD JESUS, whom you must faithfully serve. It is CHRIST that calls, commissions and improves you, to plead the cause of virtue; in all things then, be concerned to please him by whom you are commissioned. Let your only dependance be on his grace, strength
and

and presence, to make you skillful, faithful, and successful in your work. As you would be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS, live every day by faith in him, deeply sensible without CHRIST you can do nothing.---Remember, how great soever the difficulties of your work are, the LORD is able to bear you up, and carry you through---prove yourself a good steward of the mysteries of God---preach not with enticing words, which the wisdom of man teacheth; but the sacred doctrines of the Gospel, taught by the HOLY GHOST;---be close and pungent in the applications of truth, commending yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.---

THINK it not sufficient, that your people have the theory of the doctrines of the gospel---labour to bring them experimentally acquainted with the truth,---travail in birth, until CHRIST be formed in them,---let a crucified Saviour, and the unsearchable riches of his grace, be the principal subjects of your preaching,---insist much on the God-exalting, soul-humbling truths of the gospel---go daily to God by fervent prayer, for the guidance and direction of his holy spirit, to make you labourious and faithful in the discharge of your sacred office. For your encouragement, consider not only the honour of God, but the eternal interest of your own, and the dear souls of this people, over whom you are placed. If you are found faithful, tho' Israel be

not gathered, you shall be glorious in the eyes of your LORD, and your God shall be your strength. My Son, consider what I say, may the LORD be with, bless and prosper you, give you understanding in all things, and enable you so to fulfil your ministry, as finally to receive the Divine approbation of, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD.*

My address turns to the Church of CHRIST, and the Congregation in this Society.

BELOVED BRETHREN, and FRIENDS;

I DESIRE to condole with you, in the remembrance of the frown of Providence that has been on you, in the removal of your late Reverend and worthy Pastor * by death. Tho' the hand was just, the stroke was heavy, the breach great and wide. May it be sanctified to us all, both ministers and people. In the mean time, the goodness of God should be acknowledged, that while the dark cloud was spread over you, while you were left as sheep without a shepherd, the great Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, has watched over you for good, held you together as brethren in the bands of love, peace, and unity, and now opened the way for the re-settlement of the Gospel ministry among you, with great unanimity. And seeing it has pleased God,
by

* The Rev'd. EDWARD DORR.

by his holy providence, to incline you to elect one, connected with me by the tenderest ties of nature, to the ministerial office among you, to take the pastoral charge of the flock of CHRIST in this Society, and inclined him to accept your invitation; I do now express my acquiescence in the disposal of Divine Providence, that he should be your minister to serve you in the Gospel of CHRIST. My earnest desire and prayer to GOD is, that he may be enriched with all ministerial gifts and graces; made an able and faithful minister of the new testament; be sent by GOD unto you, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace; prove a real blessing to you and your children, and be happily instrumental of turning many to righteousness, and gathering a large harvest of souls to CHRIST, in this place. I desire you to receive him as a messenger of the LORD of HOSTS, as a real minister of CHRIST, and esteem him highly in love for his work's sake. My Brethren, you have heard the work of the ministry to be a great and difficult work, therefore be entreated to stand at the greatest distance from every thing that may tend to prevent and hinder his usefulness----do nothing to weaken and discourage him, but all in your power to strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart in the work of the LORD---treat him at all times with tenderness, love, and respect---be very tender of his character and reputation, and always ready to defend it against the insinuations of slanderous tongues. In special, I desire you, my brethren, to bear him on
your

your hearts at the throne of grace---pray much, and earnestly, strive together in prayer to God for him, that all his labours among you, may be crowned with abundant success, in the salvation of your souls. Great blessings have been given to the church of God in answer to prayer.---A praying people contribute much to the success of the gospel ministry. Seeing your minister comes to you, in the name of the LORD, a messenger of CHRIST, to publish the unsearchable riches of his grace; that you may receive new covenant blessings in answer to your prayers, receive the word preached by him, not as the word of man, but the word of the Living God; yea, receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. Let the pure doctrines of the gospel, which I trust your minister will preach to you, be the delight of your hearts. Do you, together with him, be steadfast and unmoveable in these things, always abounding in these things, inasmuch as ye know, that your labour shall not be in vain in the LORD.

Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our SAVIOUR, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, *Amen*,



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